MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN WASHINGTON, D. C., FEBRUARY 23, 1935

The sixth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1935, was held in its office in the Navy Department Building on February 23, 1935. The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman,
Mr. Swartwout
Mr. Howells,
Mr. Clarke
Mr. Lawrie
Mr. Savage,
also H. P. Caemmerer,

Executive Secretary and Administrative Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a. m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The Minutes of the Meeting of the Commission, held on January 16, 1935, in New York City, were approved.

2. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND I. C. C. BUILDINGS SCULPTURE: Photographs of the models for the sculpture of the five pediments of the Department of Labor and I. C. C. buildings were forwarded by Mr. Arthur Brown, architect, to Mr. Louis Simon, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, and submitted by him to the Commission of Fine Arts for advice. The photographs were sent to Mr. Lawrie, who considered them in consultation with Mr. Swartwout and Mr. Savage. Mr. Lawrie submitted his criticisms by letter of February 19, 1935, which was read by the Secretary at the meeting; the letter follows:

Dear Mr. Moore:

I may not be able to be in Washington Saturday, the 23rd, and for that reason am writing.

The sculpture for the Labor building is itself good, and the abilities of the sculptors, I think, is assurance that the final work will be excellent; but the designs and scale of the figures in the four lesser pediments I am not sure about.

In one of Mr. Brown's letters to his associate, Mr. Kramer, of which either the latter or Mr. Caemmerer sent me a copy, he said he had been studying the form and scale of these pediments for nearly three years and was quite certain that the type and scale arrived at are what the building needs. However, it is the scale of the figures in these pediments and perhaps their designs that I think Mr. Swartwout is especially concerned about.

I believe these figures, if standing erect, would be between sixteen and seventeen feet tall, and whether these are too large for pediments of this design, I am not able to say. It would be easier to judge if a draughtsman could make simple outline drawings of several of the pediments at a scale of one of the blueprints of this portion of the building, and paste them in place, if it would be possible to have it done before the Commission meets. It may be that to view some of the completed pediments on other buildings of the triangle that I think are approximately the same height from the ground, would help determine this question, even though the treatment in the pediments on the other buildings and the scale might be quite different from what the Labor building demands.

With regard to the other models, Mr. Swartwout liked those for the keystones, and I agree that they are good, but I am disappointed that there isn't some hint of Labor in some of this sculpture--Mr. Savage also spoke of this--and I am wondering if these keystones should not afford a suggestion of Labor.

Then, as to the model for the United States Seal--is this a proper rendering? We encountered this question on the Archives building. To me it seems too unlike the true seal.

I am quite certain that the base line of the panel containing the Washington composition should project so as to support the soles of the feet of the figures, which at present seem to stand only on their heels.

The spandrels below the Washington relief are much improved over the earlier designs.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Lee Lawrie.

Also Mr. Swartwout had criticized the models from an architectural standpoint and felt that the group had not been given sufficient study.

Mr. Swartwout said further: "I feel in sympathy with any architect who has been studying the subject for three years, but I fully agree with what Mr. Moore says, that we are faced with a good deal of responsibility and in the last analysis it might come back to us. In the first place there is no question in my mind but that the Roman Doric order was never meant for a pediment. It is extremely shallow. It is not a nice order anyway even as the Romans produced it. There is too much of a thinness in the fascia, the sculptured figures suggesting an enormous weight on it. However, having gone so far I think Mr. Brown and the sculptor have to be very careful before attempting to carry out the scheme. It seems to me that an 18-foot figure is very big". Mr. Howells concurred in the criticisms of Mr. Swartwout. In order to get an idea of this length, the room of the Commission was measured and found to be 19 feet wide. Mr. Lawrie carefully scaled the photographs and found that to be exact, the full size figures would measure 15 feet. Even this was considered by the members of the Commission a very large figure. Mr. Moore suggested that they look at Mr. MacNeil's figure in the east pediment of the Supreme Court building. "It looks pretty lonely in the pediment", Mr. Moore said. Mr. Lawrie said there is a sameness about the pediments; they contain for the most part simply a large figure with a very noticeable "spot" head.

Later in the day the Commission discussed the photographs with Mr. Fred Kramer and Mr. E. L. Frick, representing Mr. Brown's office. Mr. Frick had come from San Francisco to attend the meeting and had brought with him an enlarged photograph of the five pediment models. This was particularly helpful to the Commission in judging the sculptured pediments with each other. Mr. Lawrie pointed out the criticisms that had been made and Mr. Howells and Mr. Swartwout called attention to the architectural problems involved. Mr. Lawrie was then

requested to draft a reply in behalf of the Commission to be sent to the Supervising Architect, and upon its being approved by the Commission, the report was sent to Mr. Simon. (Exhibit A)

3. SCULPTURE FOR THE CALVERT STREET BRIDGE: Under date of February 13, 1935, Dr. Paul Cret, architect, sent the following letter with photographs of models for the sculptured panels to be placed on the new Calvert Street Bridge:

Dear Mr. Lawrie:

You may remember that you were good enough two years ago to give me some suggestions on the sculptors who could be invited by the District of Columbia Commissioners to submit proposals for the four bas-reliefs of the Calvert Street Bridge. The Commissioners selected Mr. Albert Stewart from those who submitted prices, but when the time came (last November) to start work on the preliminary sketches, you will remember that I again had recourse to your help in locating Mr. Stewart who had left for California. I ascertained from him that he would be there for several months, and the Commissioners decided that the distance made collaboration with him impracticable.

The Commissioners also decided that the price quoted by Mr. Stewart (and included in the budget) could not be increased. This precluded calling on the others who had submitted higher proposals. The engineers for the bridge suggested that Mr. Leon Hermant of Chicago, who had previously done work for the Delaware River Bridge under our joint direction, be asked if he would accept the commission under the same conditions as Mr. Stewart. Mr. Hermant's name and references were submitted to the District Commissioners and the contract with him was approved.

Mr. Hermant came to Philadelphia, and under my supervision, prepared preliminary sketches for the four reliefs; these are of moderate size (about $4\frac{1}{2}$' x $3\frac{1}{2}$'). The subjects selected from a list I presented are:

Transportation - by highway
by air
by water
by rail

I enclose photographs of the quarter-size preliminary sketches prepared by Mr. Hermant. These are, I am informed, satisfactory to Lt. Col. Sultan, Engineer Commissioner, who expresses the desire that the Fine Arts Commission be given an opportunity to express an opinion

on their suitability as they did for the architectural design of the bridge proper. In his letter of February 12th, Colonel Sultan writes..."Perhaps you could contact the interested member of the Commission without waiting for a formal meeting so as not to delay proceeding with the work..."

The reason for this is that we have lost considerable time for the reasons stated above, and we have to work as actively as possible now. Therefore, I write you instead of making a formal submission to the Fine Arts Commission. Do you think that the Commission would wish a formal submission (I have not been apprised of the fact so far), or would they be satisfied with your opinion and any suggestions or criticisms you would care to make on these preliminary sketches, and later, on the full-size models?

In our city Art Commission here, this policy is sometimes followed to entrust the sculptor member or the painter member with following up the working of details of a submission once approved by the whole Commission. I do not know if this is also the practice of the National Fine Arts Commission.

With my best regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,
(Signed) Paul P. Cret.

The photographs had been sent to Mr. Lawrie, who submitted the following report, which was read by the Secretary at the meeting:

February 15, 1935.

Dear Mr. Moore:

I am enclosing Mr. Cret's letter about the Calvert Street Bridge sculpture, a copy of my reply, and photographs of Leon Hermant's sketches.

It is quite likely that Hermant would make better looking sculpture in the finished models of the Highway, Water and Air schemes, but I don't see that anything can come out of the Railway scheme.

I am giving here my views.

The bridge should have sculpture of a robust, classical type, with simple and formal outlines and compact masses. This sculpture appears to be somewhat detached from its background. The heads seem to be considerably undercut, and this would produce a poor

effect from a side view. I should omit such indications as the telegraph poles in the rail composition, because they are too casual. Such indications require a more heraldic treatment in order not to be absurd. A prow of a ship in the Water composition instead of a broadside view would be better, since the other three symbol spots are head on.

Because of its compactness and simplicity, the Air composition is best; and because the Rail composition's main elements are limbs, it has no possibilities for good massing. I should ask for a new try at the latter.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Lee Lawrie.

These criticisms were sent to Dr. Cret immediately, who replied by letter as follows:

February 20, 1935.

Dear Mr. Moore:

In reference to the report of Mr. Lawrie on the preliminary sketches for the sculpture of the Calvert Street Bridge, I confess that I had also some doubts about the Railway transportation panel. In fact, if it had not been for the pressure of time and the hope that this panel would be seriously improved in preparing the larger scale models, I should have withdrawn it.

I agree entirely with the recommendations of Mr. Lawrie as to the treatment of the other 3 panels, and will see that the Sculptor carries out these suggestions.

I would appreciate the authorization of the Commission to proceed with the study at larger scale of the panels:

Air
Water
Highway Transportation

In regard to the Railway panel, I am requesting Mr. Hermant, the sculptor, to prepare another sketch which will be submitted to the Commission (or to Mr. Lawrie, should you instruct me to this effect) at the earliest opportunity.

I regret to be unable to attend the meeting of the Commission on the 23rd, but hope that the above statement may be sufficient to allow the Commission to take action.

Very sincerely yours,
(Signed) Paul P. Cret.

The photographs were given further consideration. A print of the approved design was inspected and it was noted that there are to be two panels on each end of the bridge. Mr. Clarke commented on the fact that their location will be so conspicuous that they will have to be very good or else they will be constantly criticized by the people who cross the bridge. Mr. Swartwout mentioned the coats of arms used on the bridges in England, these coats of arms being quite solid in outline and symmetrical. Mr. Lawrie felt that the sculptor had not had sufficient experience in modelling and that while the models to represent "Highway", "Air" and "Water" transportation are acceptable, the model to represent "Railroad" transportation should be restudied. The Commission concurred in this. The Commission requested also that prints of the enlarged models be submitted to the Commission at a future meeting. (Exhibit B)

3. REVISED PLANS FOR THE MUNICIPAL CENTER: Mr. Nathan C. Wyeth, Municipal Architect, submitted revised sketches for the Municipal Center development. Mr. Wyeth said the new study has been made because the heretofore approved plans for the Municipal Center to take in the four squares on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue adjacent to John Marshall Place call for too large a development and the District Government has not enough money to finance it. Therefore, it is now suggested to sell the two squares along the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue to the Federal Government and use simply the two squares facing Indiana Avenue for the administration building of the District Government. There are to be built the Police Court, Municipal Court and Juvenile Court buildings in Judiciary Square. The Recorder of Deeds office would be put in the Juvenile Court building, which is to flank the old District Supreme Court building on the east balancing the Court of Appeals building on the

west. Mr. Wyeth said this is looking to the year 1990 when it is expected the District of Columbia will have 900,000 inhabitants. In the meantime also it is suggested that the old Pension Office building be replaced by a new District Supreme Court building and that the old District Supreme Court building be restored to its use as a City Hall, to which purpose it was devoted a hundred years ago.

The Commission considered the scheme generally and felt that there would be no objection to building the new administration building of the District government along Indiana Avenue provided it is built in keeping with the government buildings of the Triangle and provided further that the two squares to be disposed of on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue adjacent to John Marshall Place are made available for monumental government buildings. It was admitted that Judiciary Square had lost its importance as a park because several streets had been cut through it. It was suggested, however, that further study should be given to the location of the proposed Police and Municipal Court buildings between E and F Streets. A report was sent to Mr. Wyeth. (Exhibit C)

5. DESIGN FOR THE ADULT TUBERCULOSIS HOSPITAL: Mr. Nathan C. Wyeth, accompanied by Mr. A. L. Kundzin of his office, submitted a design for the adult tuberculosis hospital to be built at Glendale, Maryland (15 miles east of Washington) where the children's tuberculosis hospital is now built. The building was designed in the Georgian type of architecture. The sum of $1,500,000 has been made available for the work out of Public Works funds. Mr. Wyeth said Dr. Goldwater of the hospital was consulted in connection with the design.

Mr. Swartwout and Mr. Howells inspected the design and approved it. Similarly a plan was submitted for a nurses home, designed in the Georgian

style of architecture. This is to be a separate building and will house 56 nurses. Mr. Swartwout thought there were too many dormers but Mr. Wyeth said they were necessary to give as much light as possible. It was suggested that he study the dormers to make them less conspicuous, and he said he would do this. (Exhibit D)

6. ROUTE D, LEE HIGHWAY: Mr. Moore introduced Mr. Thomas Settle, Secretary of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, who explained the question to be considered as to the Lee Highway. Mr. Settle said that some months ago the Zoning Board of Appeals of Arlington held a meeting in the Arlington County Court House, which he, Mr. Moore and Mr. Cammerer and representatives of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission attended. The question before the meeting was the changing of the setback of the proposed Lee Highway connection by way of the north side of Arlington Cemetery from 60 to 25 feet. This raised the question whether or not by such a setback a real parkway connection could be secured although the State of Virginia was trying to buy a 200-foot right of way. Before the Zoning Board took action in the matter it was suggested that their meeting be deferred for a month until the Commission of Fine Arts with other agencies of the Government interested could consider this matter. This was done.

The question was brought to the attention of Mr. Clarke for a preliminary report. (Exhibit E)

Others present at the meeting who were interested in the project were Mr. John Nolen, Jr., Director of Planning of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Mr. H. J. Spellman, Principal Highway Engineer, representing the Bureau of Public Roads, Mr. F. D. Henley, Engineer Right-of-Way, representing the Commissioner of Highways, Richmond, Virginia.

Mr. Henley was called upon to state the views of the State of Virginia regarding the project and he said that Virginia has been planning to buy a 200-foot right-of-way over Route D, which conforms to that part of the Lee Highway between Station 107 and Falls Church. Mr. Henley said he has been getting options for 2.06 miles between the Mary Baker Road and Station 107 back of Arlington for a 200-foot right-of-way and a 60-foot setback. In only two places is there danger that there will be only an 80-foot right-of-way with a 25-foot setback. There is a stretch of 1,300 feet from Station 104 to Station 39 and 500 feet from Station 75 to Station 80, or about 1,800 feet out of 2.06 miles where it will be impossible to get the 200 foot right-of-way, but Mr. Henley said he is making every effort to get it.

Mr. Henley presented a map showing that it is proposed to build two 20-foot roadways with a 20-foot parking strip in the center. Title to the 200-foot right-of-way would be in the State of Virginia and the roadway could be widened later as is needed.

Mr. Spellman then asked where the plots of ground in question are that are causing the difficulty and Mr. Henley pointed them out on the map. It was agreed that the Zoning Board of Appeals should defer action on the question of changing the setback on this part of Route D for at least two weeks so as to allow Mr. Henley time to get the rest of the options.

Mr. Clarke further stated that the whole hillside along the roadway should be bought by the Government so that the parkway would be developed like that of the Mount Vernon Highway. The wooded hillside forms a background to the Arlington Memorial Bridge. It would be unfortunate, Mr. Clarke thought, to have the trees cut down and cheap houses built there. Mr. Clarke reaffirmed the fact that a 200-foot right-of-way and a 60-foot setback should be adhered

to over Route D.

In the meantime the committee, consisting of Mr. Clarke, Mr. Spellman and Professor Hubbard, is to go over the plans and assist Mr. Henley in such way as is possible. A report was sent to Colonel Shirley. (Exhibit F; see also F-1)

Attention was called to the proposed parkway planned for the south side of Arlington National Cemetery. Mr. Spellman said it is being held in abeyance for the present pending the outcome of the project to build the parkway by way of the north side of Arlington. Mr. Moore said there is no inducement for the Government to build from Columbia Island to Station zero unless Route D from Station zero to Station 107 will be properly developed as a parkway. It is as an important approach to the National Capital as the Mount Vernon Highway.

7. GASOLINE STATION, FOURTH STREET AND MARYLAND AVENUE, S. W.: Application No. 372, for a gasoline service station at Fourth Street and Maryland Avenue, S. W., was received from the Building Inspector, on February 2, 1935. The application was brought to the attention of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which reported through Mr. Nolen. Mr. Nolen said that this station if built would block Independence Avenue and further would be built on Reservation D, which is to become a part of the Mall development. The Commission inspected the design and thought it was acceptable for a gasoline service station. However, a letter was sent to Commissioner Hazen, calling attention to the fact that this proposed station, if built, would be adjacent to the Mall. (Exhibit G)

8. FISHING BRIDGE, YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK: Mr. Thomas C. Vint, Chief Architect of the National Park Service, submitted a design for Fishing Bridge in Yellowstone National Park. This design was inspected by Mr. Clarke, and upon his recommendation was approved by the Commission.

9. LANDSCAPE PLAN FOR FREDERICKSBURG AND SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY NATIONAL MILITARY PARK: A landscape plan for the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County National Military Park was submitted by Mr. Vint of the National Park Service. The design was inspected by Mr. Clarke, and upon his recommendation, the Commission approved it.

10. BRIDGE TO CONNECT AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT BUILDINGS: Mr. Louis Simon, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, submitted a revised plan for the bridge to connect the Agriculture Department buildings. Mr. Swartwout and Mr. Howells inspected the plan, which called for a single arch bridge. Mr. Simon said the plan had been drawn in his office as the one heretofore approved did not give sufficient headway over the sidewalk and was more costly than this one.

Mr. Swartwout and Mr. Howells thought the revised sketch unsatisfactory and recommended that the design be re-studied to give the bridge more the appearance of an arch; that the windows over the arch should be made of uniform size and probably be increased in number. The Commission concurred in these suggestions, and a report was sent to Mr. Simon accordingly. (Exhibit F)

11. PLAN FOR TREATMENT OF THE AREA ADJACENT TO THE CAPITOL: Mr. Francis Sullivan, architect, submitted in behalf of the Allied Architects, a plan prepared by them for treatment and development of the area adjacent to the Capitol. Mr. Sullivan called attention to the fact that the scheme had been

submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts before, particularly with reference to the development of East Capitol Street, which is to be widened, and according to the plan is to be called the Avenue of the States. States buildings are proposed for both sides of this avenue.

The area south of the Capitol to the War College was then considered. That part in southwest Washington near the railroads was to be developed for industrial purposes and the water front was to be developed as a parkway. Near the Navy Yard in southeast Washington provision was made for a Naval War College which would be given a development similar to that of the Army War College. Mr. Sullivan said the continued industrial development of the area south of the Capitol is threatening the view of the dome from the river. Mr. Moore asked Mr. Sullivan whether they had included the James Creek Canal area south of the Capitol in the plan, since this is now a Government reservation. Mr. Sullivan said this had not been done. Mr. Sullivan then pointed out the scheme proposed for developing the area adjacent to the Union Station and the plaza. The plan proposes a bus terminal in this locality.

Mr. Sullivan said that when he talked with Mr. Moore about this whole plan recently, Mr. Moore had suggested also developing North Capitol Street to the Soldiers Home as one of the important approaches to the National Capital. Mr. Sullivan pointed out that the scheme shows such a development. Mr. Sullivan said that in his opinion all the approaches to the Capitol should be studied, although he did not feel that they should be given an elaborate treatment, such as the one now under way for the Mall.

The Commission felt that the scheme submitted by Mr. Sullivan suggested some good ideas for future development of the National Capital.

12. EXTENSION OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES BUILDING: Mr. Louis Simon, Supervising Architect, submitted a design, accompanying a letter of February 23, 1935, for the extension of the Archives Building by raising the roof, and requested the advice of the Commission regarding the design. Mr. Simon said that the original scheme of Mr. Pope contemplated a pitched roof on the building although in the construction of the building it was built with a flat roof. Mr. Simon said further that so much space has been taken up by the rotunda and corridors that now it is felt more space should be provided by a roof on the building. The Commission inspected the plans and took them under consideration.

Later in the afternoon Mr. Moore called attention to a telegram received from Mr. Pope on the subject, as follows:

February 20, 1935.

Charles Moore,
1719 H Street,
Washington, D. C.

Understand Archives matters will come before Commission Saturday. Supervising Architect has directed me to prepare drawings for the additional filing accommodations in the unoccupied space provided for it within the building. In addition he has mandatorily directed that an ample visible roof be added in order to provide for approximately one twentieth additional filing space because it is thought to be needed and will allay criticism. Original studies of building included roof possibilities and convinced me then as now that roof with its necessary material will detract from the purity, strength and permanent monumental quality of the Archives. Harry Bacon also had this conviction regarding a roof on the Lincoln Memorial. The present and accepted design was based on conclusion and survey that has as now constructed of eventual capacity was sufficient to house all important documents for fifty years and these our national history justified the present design and location. Opinion now differs and will differ as to nature and amount of documents to be included. Could not these variable opinions be better met in an economically, flexibly designed annex elsewhere thus safeguarding Archives as is. Am writing this for your information and sending from New York photos with and without roof. Here to shake a cold. Best wishes from all. Please acknowledge receipt prepaid.

John Russell Pope.

Mr. Moore said, speaking for the historians, that it will be ten years before the Government documents to go into the building will be properly selected and placed in the building and that it is a question whether more space is actually needed for many years.

The Commission regarded it very unfortunate that it is proposed to expand the building by raising the roof, and a report was sent to Mr. Simon accordingly. (Exhibit I)

13. REMODELLING SOUTH SIDE OF THE OLD PATENT OFFICE: The National Park Service submitted a model and perspective, prepared by Mr. William T. Partridge, consulting architect, for remodeling the south front of the old Patent Office building. The perspective showed that it is proposed to give it a treatment exactly like that on the north side, with five entrances in the wall under the columns. According to this plan, F Street from Seventh to Ninth Streets will be widened from 30 to 35 feet.

Mr. Clarke inspected the model illustrating the grade proposed for the street and thought it would work out all right.

An inspection was made of the south side of the building later in the afternoon and it was noted that it would not be possible to put in a terrace, to take the place of the ramp which is there now, because of the lack of space. Instead, therefore, Mr. Clarke suggested a grassy slope with possibly a low wall at the end of it so as to lessen the height of the slope.

Mr. Howells and Mr. Swartwout discussed with Mr. Partridge the treatment of the south wall and how to adjust the layers of stone so as to break the monotony in the wall. (Exhibit J)

14. LANDSCAPE PLANS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE: The National Park Service submitted through Mr. Malcolm Kirkpatrick, landscape architect, the following plans:

1. Palisades recreational park along the Potomac near the filtration plant at the District line.

2. Marion Park, which is located along South Carolina Avenue between Third and Fifth Streets, being bi-sected by Fourth Street, S. E.

3. Folger Park, which is located along North Carolina Avenue between Second and Third Streets, S. E.

4. Turkey Thicket at 10th Street and Michigan Avenue, N. E.

5. Lafayette Park, which is not entirely a rehabilitation project. The item of greatest importance is felt to be the opening of the vista from Sixteenth Street to the White House.

The designs for Folger and Marion Parks are part of the park rehabilitation program. The plant materials, lawns and walk areas in both of these parks are badly degenerated and the existing physical layouts are not adequate for present day usage.

These plans were referred to Mr. Clarke for his criticisms and report at the next meeting.

15. PAN AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION BUILDING: Mr. Moore reported that he had heard from Mr. Delano that Mr. Ickes had withdrawn his objection to the erection of the Pan American Administration Building in the triangle at 19th Street and Constitution Avenue since he now understands that it is to be a rather small building. Mr. Ickes withdrew his objection with the understanding that automobiles will not be parked in the triangle and that the building will not be enlarged at a future time. Mr. Moore sent the following telegram to Dr. Cret:

"I understand all objections have been removed to building Pan American Administration Building at once".

Dr. Cret acknowledged the receipt of the telegram, saying he was pleased with this information and would await the return of Dr. Rowe from South America in a few weeks before proceeding with the project. (Exhibit K)

16. TWELFTH REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS: The Secretary stated that Mr. Moore had undertaken to prepare for publication the Twelfth Report of the Commission of Fine Arts for the period of July 1, 1929, to December 31, 1934. The report is to contain eight or ten chapters and will be about the size of the Eleventh Report of the Commission. There will be illustrations. The report will feature in particular the completed buildings in the Triangle and a number of other public buildings and improvements in Washington which have been built since the Eleventh Report was printed.

17. TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS: Mr. Moore called attention to the fact that on May 17, 1935, the Commission of Fine Arts will have been in existence twenty-five years. Mr. Moore suggested that on the evening of that day the Commission give a dinner at the Century Club, to which all the former members of the Commission would be invited. The Commission endorsed this suggestion.

The Commission adjourned to meet in Washington, Saturday, March 23, 1935. On the evening of that day the members of the Commission have been invited to attend the opening of the Biennial Exhibition of Paintings at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, which will be opened on the evening of March 23.

The Commission had as their guests at luncheon at the Cosmos Club: Hon. Robert Luce, former member of Congress; Mr. Francis Sullivan, Mr. Fred Kramer, Mr. E. L. Fisher, Mr. Louis Simon, Mr. A. B. Cammerer, and Mr. Thomas Vint.

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS MAY 17, 1910

RECEIVED
COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
WASHINGTON, D. C.
FEB 12 1935
NOTED

CHARLES MOORE, Chairman
EGERTON SWARTWOUT JOHN M. HOWELLS
GILMORE D. CLARKE EUGENE F. SAVAGE
LEE LAWRIE CHARLES A. COOLIDGE
H. P. CAEMMERER, Secretary

NAVY DEPARTMENT BUILDING
WASHINGTON

February 11, 1935

Charles Moore, Chairman,
The Commission of Fine Arts,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Moore:

Confirming our telephone conversation this morning, I have had a talk with Lee Lawrie and Gene Savage, and told them what you said, and they both felt as they did before, that it is a matter that should be considered very carefully by the whole Commission. I have looked up the minutes and as far as I can find, there has been only one submission and that was on December 3rd last. Lawrie was not present but he had previously seen the photographs. Savage, at the time the photographs were considered, was over at the White House seeing about the hanging of the pictures in the Office addition. I don't find any record in my files of any letter written by you to Arthur Brown, but as I remember, we told Mr. Fred Kramer, the man who brought the photographs in, that we were not over much pleased with the way the thing was developing, and particularly questioned the matter of scale. There was considerable talk about the size of the figures, being about twenty-five feet high if they stood up. I imagine, from what Lawrie told me, that Brown has been working on this sculpture for some time, but that the actual length of time spent by the sculptors is about six months. As I recall it, from the photographs, there had been made models at different scales, beginning rather small and working up to perhaps a quarter full size.

Now the second submission that we have just seen, is not substantially different from what we saw before, although there is no photograph of the large central pediment. In the smaller pediments, of which there are four, there is but one figure, and it seemed to us that it was about the same size as it was in the first submission. We judged this by the spacing of the brackets in the raking cornice. The figures may be slightly improved, but the principle is the same as

it was before. The infill at each end of the figures in the toes of the pediment is confused and don't seem to mean very much.

We found from the drawings in Lawrie's possession, that the width of the pediment; that is to say, the clear space inside of the mouldings, is about 45 feet, and the clear height of center about 10 feet. We measured this space off in Lawrie's studio and it was about the total width of his studio, and it seemed inconceivable to us that one figure could fill the space adequately. As I look out of the window, I see the two pediments on the pavilion of the Public Library. I don't think they are more than 30 feet in the clear; perhaps less. There are two figures in each pediment, as you remember, with quite a sizeable object in between the figures, and yet it is generally felt they are too big and dwarf the scale of Tommy's Library. Now the Labor pediments are about 20 feet wider than Tommy's pediment and only have one figure, and speaking entirely from memory, I should think that this figure is almost twice as big as the pediment figures in the Supreme Court pediment.

Now Brown has told us, through his representative, and also written I believe to Lawrie, that he has been working on this idea for three years, and this is exactly what he wants, and his building will be seriously marred if he doesn't get what he wants. I have the greatest sympathy for the way he feels, and I must say, entirely off the record, that I am not wildly in love with his whole building. I do like, as a whole, the part of the building that most people don't like, and that is the central motive with the adjoining open colonnade, or bridge. Most people think there are entirely too many columns and they don't mean anything. But I strongly don't like the expanse of bare wall between the pediments with an awful lot of ill sorted windows. And I suppose that whatever he does with the pediments isn't going to make an awful lot of difference in the look of the building, and I certainly don't want to upset him, particularly as he is now just starting on the Federal Reserve competition. And I also know that there is great pressure from the Government to get the work started. On the other hand, we, as a Commission, have certain responsibilities, and if the sculpture isn't successful I suppose we will hear about it and will have to assume a certain amount of responsibility for it. I am pretty sure that both Lawrie and Savage feel the same way about it as I do, and hence our request to have the matter considered at the next meeting.

The whole trouble is that Mr. Brown has followed along the course pursued by Aitken, and possibly by some others, in not taking the Commission into their confidence from the very start, but going ahead and getting a lot of work done and then feeling that if we hold them up we are not playing base-ball. In other words, that the opinion of the Commission is more or less rubber stampish. I don't know where an architect would get off if he pursued the same course with his client, because after all, the Commission, in this case, is in somewhat the position of a client who has the ultimate say. And if we went ahead blindly without any preliminary approvals, we would find ourselves in the poorhouse quicker than we ordinarily do. I think that Mr. Brown should have brought this matter to our attention in the early fall, with preliminary sketches, and a long detailed letter of explanation, and this would have given us ample time to have made any criticism before an awful lot of work had been done. I am getting just a little tired of the attitude of some people in spending months and years and wasting all kinds of time on a proposition and then feeling hurt because the Commission doesn't approve it over night. I find the same thing happening right along in the Committee on Competitions. I have really broken all records, and nearly broken my neck, in the Nashville and the Federal Reserve competitions in making very quick decisions in very complicated programs, and, as I say, I am a little fed up.

There is another thing that is very distressing. Photographs are submitted to us without the slightest indication of the actual size of the completed object, or of the scale at which the model is made, and where there are photographs of a good many objects, as there are in the present case, the photographs are all sorts of sizes and scales; in the present case there are some large photographs of key blocks that must be seven or eight times the actual scale of the pediments. It is impossible to judge such things intelligently. I think in the future submissions of photographs should be made at the same scale so that they will fall into their proper relation with each other in the photographs, and the sizes should be put on the photographs, and I really think that in an important thing like a pediment, the photograph of the model should be reduced down to the size of the actual drawing and pasted on the drawing, showing the entire pediment. I think that is the only way you can judge it carefully; that is to say, you have to know the height from the ground and its relation to the adjacent parts of the building as well

as to the pediment itself. And when this is settled at a small scale, then they can go up to the bigger scale. The whole thing is not handled in the right way. Of course men with the skill and experience of Jimmy and Dolph Weinman, you can pretty well depend on, but I don't think the others are up to it.

All this is a pretty long letter but I want to give you, as well as I can, my point of view. And I am pretty sure that Lee Lawrie and Gene Savage will agree with me.

With all best wishes,

Yours very truly,

Egerton Swartwout.

ES:MH

C O P Y

COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington,D.C.

February 25, 1935.

Dear Mr. Simon:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on February 23, 1935, gave particular attention to the photographs of the models for the sculpture for the Department of Labor and Interstate Commerce Commission Buildings received from Arthur Brown, the architect, and submitted by you to the Commission.

The photographs were brought to the particular attention of Mr. Lee Lawrie, sculptor member of the Commission, and the Commission were also in consultation with Mr. Frick of Mr. Brown's office concerning them. The Commission have to report as follows:

The scale of the figures in the pediments as shown on the photograph of the building should not be enlarged in the final models. The figures in the pavilion pediments in this photograph scale about 15 feet.

Central pediment: Clarify the outlines of the three principal groups and simplify the whole top outline of this sculpture, eliminating many of the smaller spots that tend to confuse the silhouette.

In the pavilion pediments there is a danger of the composition appearing from the street as being of solely large human figures. The sculptors should connect the smaller end masses sufficiently to the central masses to overcome that danger.

EXHIBIT A

The Commission disapprove the types of heads on key-stones Nos. 1, 3, 5, 8. These heads should be less ornamental in type and have more character.

The escutcheon design No. 12 for the Lobby Hall, pretending to be the Seal of the United States does not represent the true seal; either this model should be the seal or be treated as a decoration composed of an eagle and shield, not representing the seal and without the words, United States of America.

Panel in porch: The figure of Washington is not enough of a portrait, which it should be. Foreshorten the feet to prevent the toes from projecting so far over the base line, and give the long thin strip of wall dividing this panel and the spandrels, some treatment to overcome this obviously narrow looking division.

The Commission discussed with Mr. Frick the importance of having the sculpture in the pediments in proper scale architecturally to the pediments themselves. The suggestions which the Commission made on the subject will be embodied in the final models.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. Louis Simon,
Supervising Architect,
Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.

P. S. The scabbard should be on the left side of Washington and not on the right as the sculptor has it. But he may have a naked sword at either side if he wishes. C. M.

C O P Y

March 2, 1935.

Dear Dr. Cret:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on February 23, 1935, considered the photographs which you submitted of the sketch models by Leon Hermant for sculpture on the Calvert Street Bridge. The Commission concurred in the criticisms which were made by Mr. Lee Lawrie, sent to you by letter of February 16.

It is agreeable to the Commission of Fine Arts that the sculptor proceed with the models to represent "Highway", "Air" and "Water" transportation. The relief "Railroad" transportation should be re-studied.

The Commission felt that there should be little more of a classical touch in the final models of the sketches. The Commission would like to see prints of the enlarged models.

The members of the Commission noted the location of these reliefs at the ends of the bridge--a location which is very prominent and where the reliefs will be seen by persons crossing the bridge. Therefore, it would undoubtedly be desirable that full sized solar prints or models of the relief be set in place and inspected at the bridge heads before proceeding with the execution of these reliefs.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very sincerely yours,
(Signed) Charles Moore,
Chairman.

Dr. Paul P. Cret,
112 South 16th Street,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

EXHIBIT B

C O P Y

February 28, 1935.

Dear Mr. Wyeth:

The Commission of Fine Arts were interested in your presentation of the new scheme for a Civic Center for the District of Columbia, on February 23, 1935.

When the project of a Civic Center for the District of Columbia came up at a joint meeting of the Federal Buildings Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts, this Commission heartily agreed with the proposition of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia for the location of the Civic Center on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue between Third and Sixth Streets. The Commission of Fine Arts hailed the proposition as a long step towards cleaning up the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue. This becomes the more important to this Commission by reason of the fact that under the Shipstead-Luce Act the Commission of Fine Arts has certain duties in respect of the architectural appearance of private buildings on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue from the Capitol to the Treasury Department.

Eventually the squares in question were bought, the buildings were razed, and plans prepared by the Municipal Architect were approved.

The group of buildings as designed gave to the District both a location and a series of buildings comporting with the dignity of the District Government as a function of the National Government concerned with the administration of the Civic affairs of the National Capital, under the exclusive legislative powers of Congress. This is an important consideration on a par with the Avenue improvement.

The proposition as submitted by you to the Commission of Fine Arts on Saturday last involves the abandonment by the District of the Pennsylvania Avenue frontage and the occupation of Judiciary Square with three court buildings, together with the location of the District Administration building across John Marshall Place opposite the old Court House.

The further occupation of Judiciary Square would be open to more serious consideration were it not for the fact that the recreational value of the Square has been so largely impaired by the two roads forming extensions of E and F Streets through it. At the same time it is a question whether further sacrifice should be made of the altogether too little park space in that congested portion of the city.

It is also a question as to whether the withdrawal of the administrative building and its architectural subordination to fit its new site is not attended with a real sacrifice of that dignity due to the District of Columbia in its representative capacity.

These are matters which must be decided finally by other authorities than the Commission of Fine Arts; but the fact that this Commission were consulted by the then authorities (as was by law required) in the location of the Civic Center, and the further fact that the architecture of the buildings and the landscape setting appurtenant to them are matters on which this Commission are required to advise, make it incumbent on this Commission to call attention to considerations which must have the attention of your office in any new studies made for such a change of location as is now proposed.

Unless, therefore, arrangements can be made with the General Government to take over and build upon the Pennsylvania Avenue frontage, and unless the character of the new buildings will comport with other Government buildings of like importance to the dignity and beauty of the national capital, the Commission of Fine Arts would with hold for the present consideration of the new scheme.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Hon. Nathan C. Wyeth,
Municipal Architect,
District Building,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT C

C C P Y

February 25, 1935.

Dear Mr. Wyeth:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on February 23, 1935, approved designs which you submitted for the adult building of the Tuberculosis Hospital and for the nurses home, to be built at Glendale, Maryland.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. Nathan C. Wyeth,
Municipal Architect,
District Building,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT D

Address me
County Office Bldg.
White Plains. N.Y.

ARCHITECTURE : LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE : PAINTING : SCULPTURE

THE COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE
CORNELL UNIVERSITY
ITHACA, NEW YORK

FEB 11 1935

EXHIBIT I

February 9 1935

Dear Mr Moore,

I was interested in your letter of the 1st with regard to Route 9 for the Lee Boulevard in Virginia between Station 107 and Columbia Island. This is one of the most important approaches to Washington and warrants the best treatment that it is possible to provide. The right of way should be a minimum of 200 feet in width and frontage rights prohibited. In case owners have no other means of access, except on the existing road, then it may be necessary to provide such access until such time as other means of access to their properties is provided. In other words, the taking should represent that which obtains on a regular parkway project such as

the Mt. Vernon Memorial Parkway to Mt Vernon ——. Certainly the State of Virginia should be willing to provide a suitable approach to Washington from the west, ~~not~~ east of Station 107. The strait through which Conte "D" passes is on a reasonably steep gradient and frontage rights should be prohibited for reasons of safety —— as well as appearance. A clause should be added in deeds for purchase to prevent the erection of hill boards within 300' of the parkway taking lines ——.

I assume that when you mention building line all fronts upon it distances may from the taking lines that ~~structures~~ are permitted to be erected. Sixty Eighty feet is not a bit too great and nothing less should be permitted. Glad to hear of the joint meeting on the 23rd

Sincerely.

Charles E. Keller

C O P Y

February 26, 1935.

Dear Colonel Shirley:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on February 23, 1935, were pleased to consider with Mr. Henley of your office, the Lee Highway connection by way of the north side of Arlington National Cemetery, known as Route D. Others participating in the conference were representatives of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the Bureau of Public Roads, the National Park Service.

The particular question under consideration related to the width of the proposed right-of-way over Route D. This matter had been given careful consideration by Mr. Gilmore D. Clarke, landscape architect member of the Commission of Fine Arts, and who was the consultant on the Mount Vernon Highway.

It was the unanimous opinion of all present that the 200-foot right-of-way and the 60-foot setback specified in the approved plan should be adhered to over the entire 2.06 miles from Station C (Mary Baker Road) to Station 107.

The Commission of Fine Arts regard the proposed approach to the National Capital from the west as important as the approach from the south by way of the Mount Vernon Highway and that it should be developed with equal dignity. The Zoning Commission of Arlington County has been requested to defer action with reference to a suggested change in the setback from 60 to 25 feet over this portion of the route, for at least two weeks so as to allow you time to procure the remainder of your options.

Also the special committee, consisting of Mr. Henry V. Hubbard, landscape architect member of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Mr. John Nolen, city planner, Mr. Harold J. Spellman of the Bureau of Public Roads, and Mr. Gilmore D. Clarke of the Commission of Fine Arts, was requested to cooperate with your office in the further development of the project.

The Commission of Fine Arts is looking forward to the construction of Route D, and hopes that the work can be carried out during the next few months. It has been a pending project for more than ten years but we are happily looking forward to its realization.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very truly yours,
(Signed) Charles Moore,
Chairman.

Colonel H. G. Shirley,
Commissioner,
Department of Highways,
State Capitol Grounds,
Richmond, Virginia.

EXHIBIT F

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

RICHMOND

H. G. SHIRLEY, COMMISSIONER
WADE H. MASSIE, WASHINGTON, VA.
WM. H. EAST, R. F. D. No. 5, STAUNTON, VA.
SOL. W. RAWLS, FRANKLIN, VA.
J. FRANK WYSOR, PULASKI, VA.

C. S. MULLEN, CHIEF ENGINEER
F. D. HENLEY, RIGHT OF WAY ENGINE
A. B. SNEAD, PURCHASING AGENT
C. J. ALLARD, AUDITOR

IN REPLY PLEASE REFER TO 1935

ROUTE NO. _____ PROJECT NO. _____

Lee Memorial Driveway.

February 27, 1935.

Mr. Charles Moore, Chairman,
The Commission of Fine Arts,
Navy Department Building,
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. Moore:

Thank you very much for your letter of the 26th concerning the Lee Memorial Driveway. I noted the wishes of your Commission in regard to a setback. Will be glad to lay your request before my Commission at their next meeting, which will be sometime the latter part of March.

Yours very cordially,

H. G. Shirley

Commissioner.

S:v.

EXHIBIT F-1

C O P Y

February 25, 1935.

Dear Mr. Hazen:

Plans for a gas station to be located on Reservation D, Fourth Street, S. W., Nos. 113 to 125, have been submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts for consideration. The plans themselves are not open to objection on the part of this Commission. As such plans go, they are excellent.

It is understood that the Zoning Commission permits gas stations in the area which includes Reservation D.

Therefore, this Commission, acting under the Shipstead-Luce Act, has no alternative except to approve the plans as submitted through the Inspector of Buildings of the District of Columbia.

At the same time, the Commission of Fine Arts respectfully call the attention of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia to the fact that on the opening of Independence Avenue and the completion of the Mall as now proceeding according to authority of Congress, this gas station will fall within the Mall boundaries. The property then will have to be condemned at a price to include the value of the new structure.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully,
(Signed) Charles Moore,
Chairman.

Hon. Melvin C. Hazen,
President, Board of Commissioners
of the District of Columbia,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT G

C O P Y

February 26, 1935.

Dear Mr. Simon:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on February 23, 1935, inspected a revised sketch for the bridge to cross Independence Avenue.

The Commission recommend a re-study of the design to give the bridge more the appearance of an arch. The Commission also suggest that the windows be even and it may be desirable to have more windows in the bridge than are shown in the design.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. Louis Simon,
Supervising Architect,
Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT H

C O P Y

February 25, 1935.

Dear Mr. Simon:

During nearly a century and a half of its existence this nation alone among civilized countries has had no building in which to protect and display and make available to historians its archives. This want has been supplied in the building program now nearing completion.

Before plans were drawn, the question of the adequacy of the building both for the present and for an indefinite future were made the subject of study by the officials of the Treasury Department, who visited the archives buildings of European countries in addition to obtaining the fullest data in regard to our own archives. On the basis of this survey the present building was planned and is being constructed with provision for expansion.

Before the plans were actually made the American Historical Association was consulted as to both adequacy of the building and also methods of use. An organization for the administration of the national archives has been set up by Congress and is now functioning.

As the result of this intensive consideration extending over more than a dozen years, the architect met the requirements and at the same time has designed a building which while yet uncompleted in details has won the admiration alike of the architectural profession and of the laity--one of the very finest buildings in the United States and

EXHIBIT I

certainly equal to the best architectural work being done anywhere in the world.

Moreover, the Archives Building was designed as a constituent portion of the largest and most monumental group of public buildings ever erected at one time by any nation.

Any alteration in the design of the building, such as has been proposed, by the addition of a visible roof, would seriously impair not only the admirable design of the building itself, but also would destroy the harmony and effectiveness of the entire group of buildings. This result would be particularly unfortunate when the Archives Building is viewed from the Capitol.

When viewed from a distance from the city, the roof would dominate the skyline and seriously detract from the simple mass composition of roof lines which obtains now. Seen from the Mount Vernon Highway such a change would throw the whole composition out of balance.

All of these matters were considered by the Commission of Fine Arts in conjunction with the architect, the Board of Architectural Advisers, and the officials of the Treasury Department while the plans were under discussion. This Commission, therefore, cannot approve any such impairment of a great and noble composition as would result from placing a visible roof on the Archives Building.

This Commission favor the suggestion (originating in the Treasury Department) of a separate, non-monumental storage building in which to house those papers which for purposes of protection to the Government should be preserved, but which are in no sense archives, having no

historical value. Such a building, if and when needed, could be located anywhere in the District of Columbia; and could be added to from time to time as might be required. Only such a building can care for that huge mass of semi-useless documents which accumulate year by year; but which should not occupy valuable space in a building architecturally of the highest class.

It is the conviction of the Commission that under the orderly method of procedure in selecting papers on an archives basis as now begun, at least ten years will elapse before any additional space will be required.

The blue print suggesting a heightening of the wall and changing the pitch of the roof was disapproved.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Hon. Louis Simon,
Supervising Architect,
Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.

C O P Y

March 2, 1935.

Dear Mr. Cammerer:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on February 23, 1935, approved the drawings submitted by your office for remodeling the old Patent Office Building so as to remove the steps on the south side and make the south entrance like that on the north side of the building.

The Commission also considered a model submitted by Mr. Partridge showing the grades proposed on F Street, as it is to be widened between Seventh and Ninth Streets. The Commission found on inspecting the building that there is not room enough after the street is widened for a terrace. However, the slope could be made less steep by putting in a low wall at the bottom of it.

The architect members of the Commission made certain suggestions to Mr. Partridge as to the layers of stone of the south wall, so as to break its monotony. It is understood that these suggestions will be observed in carrying out the project.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Charles Moore,
Chairman.

Hon. A. B. Cammerer, Director,
National Park Service,
Interior Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT J

PAUL PHILIPPE CRET
ARCHITECT

PAUL P. CRET
JOHN F. HARBESON
WILLIAM J. H. HOUGH
WILLIAM H. LIVINGSTON
ROY F. LARSON

ARCHITECTS BUILDING
17TH STREET AT SANSOM
PHILADELPHIA

RECEIVED
COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
FEB 26, 1935

February 25, 1935.

Hon. Charles Moore
The Commission of Fine Arts
Navy Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Moore:

I am quite pleased with the agreement in relation to the P A U Administration Building. I am informed that the Secretary of Interior made his consent subject to two conditions:

No parking space on the property
No future extension

These will have to be agreed to by the Building Committee, and the absence of Dr. Rowe from the city may cause some delay.

Anyway, we are facing some delay; this time through a decision of the Board of Directors of the Union to delay construction until next spring.

It is the fate of this building to progress by one step forward, two backward.

I am none the less obliged to you in wiring of the removal of one of the obstacles.

Sincerely yours,

Paul P. Cret

PAUL P. CRET

PPC:HG

EXHIBIT K